



THE

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CANADA.

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HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF MANCHESTER, K.P.,

IN THE CHAIR.

BY

J. G. BOURINOT.

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THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CANADA.

By J. G. BOURINOT,

Clerk Assistant of the House of Commons of Canada ; author of a Paper on the "Marine and Fisheries of Canada,"* &c.

Not very many years ago it was a common subject of complaint among Canadians that the importance of their country from a national point of view was very far from being appreciated by the people of Great Britain. With the exception of some statesmen and officials, who were forced to study Canadian questions, few persons in the mother-country knew anything of the British North-American Colonies, or seemed anxious to inform themselves as to their progress and resources. When Englishmen were sent out by Downing-street to administer the Government, some of them did not always enter on their duties with any very great degree of pleasure, but appeared too often to consider themselves as in some measure political exiles. Even so distinguished a statesman as Lord Sydenham seemed to feel that his onerous task of reconciling antagonistic political elements, and cementing the foundations of a new constitutional system in a country torn asunder by political factions and national antipathies, was hardly valued as it ought to be by the statesmen and publicists of England. "So though I write to you in high spirits, and recount my *hauts faits*," said this distinguished Governor in a letter to an English friend just before his death, "you need not think that I shall come back bragging of them, or expect to find that they have rendered me half so *marquant* a person, as a good speech in the House of Commons, or a successful breakfast at Greenwich would have done." But this was a mere humorous expression of feeling compared with the bitter utterances of Canadians who, time and again, found their affairs slighted, and themselves considered as a sort of social Pariahs whenever they had occasion to visit the parent state. The reason for such sentiments of outraged pride is obvious enough. Canadians have always felt a warm attachment for their "old home;" and ever anxious for some recognition of their claims to

* See Transactions of Royal Colonial Institute for 1873.

the notice and respect of the mother-country, they have naturally fretted under that supreme indifference, almost contemptuous indifference, which, too long, was meted out to the people of England's Colonial dependencies.

But now, *nous avons changé tout cela*. It can no longer be said that this indifference has any existence, so far as Canada is concerned. For some years past, ever since the establishment of the Federal Union, the attention of the statesmen and the publicists of England has been directed to the development of her Premier Colony, and not only on the floor of Parliament, but on the public platform, and in the periodicals and journals of the day has she been encouraged in her work of progress. The consolidation of the Empire in North America is necessarily a national work, calculated to engage the sympathies of British statesmen, and it is not strange that so many of them have at last been brought to consider whether prosperous communities with so many elements of greatness could not be brought into more intimate relations with the Empire at large.

Probably no more significant fact can be given in this connection than the constant influx every year of distinguished visitors from the British Isles, desirous of seeing for themselves the evidences of the wealth and capabilities of Canada. During the past summer, for instance, Canada was visited by several agricultural delegates, who have been able to inform themselves on those features of Canadian development which are of practical value to the masses of the mother-country, now suffering under the miseries arising from poor harvests and manufacturing depression. But this is only one among many facts which illustrate the attention that is at last being directed to a country which has, within thirty years, attained a high position among commercial and industrial communities.

Under these circumstances, the present is an opportune time for reviewing some of the most salient features of the political system which has, within so short a period, given so remarkable a stimulus to the industrial progress of the Dominion, and for presenting at the same time some facts which show the high position it occupies among the dependencies of England. In such a review, it is not the pretension of the writer to bring forward any original ideas, for the subject is one that has been treated in many ways of late years; but all he hopes to do is to group together in a single paper certain facts and opinions which he has had special facilities for collecting, and which may contribute to the discussion of a subject which ought to be interesting to everyone who values the integrity of the Empire.

The liberal system of Government which Canada now enjoys was not the sudden inspiration of some eminent statesman, or the issue of the fertile brain of some philosopher, following the example of the illustrious Locke, who devised an elaborate constitution for South Carolina, in which landgraves and caciques were to represent a Colonial nobility. The constitution of Canada, on the contrary, is the practical outcome of the experience of astute statesmen. It has not been won in a decade or two, but is the result of three-quarters of a century of political agitation, during which English statesmen have been taught the folly of old Colonial administration, and have acknowledged the wisdom of meddling as little as possible with Colonial affairs. Previous to the American War of Independence, the English Government paid very little attention to the progress of matters in the Colonies, and appeared to have no fixed principle of Colonial policy except that their trade should be kept as closely as possible in English hands. But when the old Colonies had severed their connection with England, and won their place among independent nations, the men who controlled the Government of the Empire shook off their supineness and went to the other extreme. Awakened at last to the importance of Colonial administration, the Imperial authorities showed every disposition to educate the people of Canada in self-government; but, unfortunately, the system under which this was to be done was based on erroneous principles from the outset. No doubt the difficulties which an English Minister entrusted with Colonial administration had to encounter in those days were calculated to perplex him, and prevent too often the wisest solution of some intricate political problem. It must now, however, be admitted by the impartial historian that the authorities in England, however ignorant they might be at times of the true situation of affairs, or incapable of administering the best remedy, were, as a rule, sincerely desirous of governing for the good of the majority, and were very far from harbouring the idea of perpetuating any injustice or oppression. But it was very difficult for a British Minister, in those days of slow communications, to obtain a true insight into the causes of Canadian grievances, and provide some remedies for the notorious discontent that commenced to gain ground after the war of 1812 in Canada. The men who should have kept them informed as to the true situation of affairs were not always well chosen in point of political training. The military Governors, who were generally the choice of the Colonial Office, were too choleric and impatient of opposition, and seemed too often to think restless Colonial politicians could be managed as a regiment of soldiers. Obstinate Canadians who did not look

at matters through the gubernatorial spectacles were lectured and scolded like so many unruly school-boys. If the birch-rod could not be applied, at all events they could be dismissed with some such severe reprimand as Sir James Craig was always ready to administer to the Quebec Legislative Assembly, when it obstinately asserted its claim to a legitimate influence in the government of the Province. Guided and influenced almost solely by the official party in the provinces, the Governors were seldom able to assume that dignified position of independence which would have helped them to deal successfully with popular grievances, and give them real weight and power among the people. But, however excellent might have been their intentions, they were powerless in the face of a constitutional system which was worked on principles well calculated to provoke political difficulties. It was inevitable that a system which gave all the substantial power to officials who owed no responsibility to the people, could only lead to endless complications according as the masses understood the true meaning and intent of representative institutions. It was a mere mockery for the British Government to give the people of British North America a representative system whilst they refused its logical sequence in the form of a government which was sustained by and owed responsibility to the popular or elected house. Such a system was at variance with the constitution of England, of which the Colonial constitution was to be "the transcript," so far as "the circumstances of the country permitted." The British authorities, however, for very many years, never could be brought to believe that the "circumstances" of Canada admitted the exact reproduction in the Colony of the system of responsible government. And yet every day's history illustrated the impossibility of keeping the power in the hands of an irresponsible Executive, only supported by a nominated branch, filled with officials and dominated by a desire to impede the legislation of the popular body, which, however factious and overbearing at times, had at least reason and justice on its side in its claim for a share in the government of the country. In Lower Canada the gravity of the situation was increased by the growth of national rivalry and animosities, but there, as in all other parts of British America, the existing evils had their origin in the political system. From Halifax to York there was an irresponsible executive; the two Houses were constantly in collision; the country was governed by a bureaucracy, or a "family compact;" and to complicate matters still more and add to the public irritation, the Imperial Government was constantly interfering in matters on which they had no reliable information, and which, in any case, should have been left wholly

to the Provincial Governments. To suppose that such a system would work well "implied a belief that Canadians could enjoy representative institutions for half a century without acquiring any of the characteristics of a free people; that Englishmen renounced every political opinion and feeling when they entered a Colony, or that the spirit of Anglo-Saxon freedom was utterly changed and weakened among those who were transplanted across the Atlantic."*

Unhappily, it was not till some misguided men broke out into rebellion, that the British Government felt itself compelled to take practical measures to inquire into the causes of disaffection in Canada. It is impossible to exaggerate the value of the services of Lord Durham during this national crisis. Canada owes him a deep debt of gratitude for a Report, remarkable for its fairness, its perfect appreciation of the causes of the discontent, and its wise suggestions of the remedy that ought to be immediately provided. The result was the new Constitution of 1840, under which the Canadas were again united in one Legislature, and their constitutional rights considerably enlarged; but even then, despite the lessons taught them by the past, British statesmen hesitated to grant responsible government in the full meaning of the term to the Colonies. Though Lord John Russell was far from conceding the principle in its entirety, yet the effect of his policy was virtually to inaugurate responsible government, as desired by Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Howe, and other eminent Canadians of those times. Personal government was virtually at an end from the moment the principle was admitted that the advisers of the Governors should be at times changed from motives of public policy. Lord Metcalfe, on the question of patronage, brought himself into collision with his Government, and in order to obtain a majority in support of his views, exerted his personal influence at the elections; but, as it has been well observed, the advantage which he then gained "was dearly purchased by the circumstance that the Parliamentary Opposition was no longer directed merely against the advisers of the Governor, but against the Governor himself, and the British Government of which he was the organ." The action of Lord Metcalfe in this crisis had certainly its effect in settling for ever the principles on which the Government of Canada should be conducted. When Lord Elgin was appointed Governor-General, he was the first to receive instructions to act generally upon the advice of the Executive Council, and "to take as members of that body those persons who might be pointed out to him as entitled to do so by their

* Lord Durham's Report, 1839.

possessing the confidence of the Assembly." From that day to this, the representatives of the Queen have never swerved from the principle of governing in accordance with the well-understood wishes of the people, as expressed through their representatives in Parliament. In these later times, on the occasion of a very perplexing crisis in political affairs, Lord Dufferin well expressed the duty of a Governor under the system of government which now prevails in Canada :—

"My only guiding star in the conduct and maintenance of my official relations with your public men is the Parliament of Canada . . . To those men alone, whom the absolute will of the Confederate Parliament of the Dominion may assign to me as my responsible advisers, can I give my confidence. Whether they are the heads of this party or that, must be a matter of indifference to the Governor-General. So long as they are maintained by Parliament in their positions, so long is he bound to give them his unreserved confidence, to defer to their advice, and loyally to assist them with his counsels."

The Union of 1841 was therefore the commencement of a new era in the political history of British North America. It was the commencement of an epoch in which all the mistakes of the old Colonial system under which the province languished were retrieved. For half a century, Downing Street had been omnipotent, and literally meddled only to muddle; but with the new condition of affairs, British statesmen showed an anxiety in the other direction, of only exercising a nominal control over Canadian matters, and conceding to Canadians all those measures which they considered necessary for the better government of the country. After refusing to Lower Canada for years an Elective Legislative Council, it was granted without demur to the United Canadas. As a result of the introduction of the principle of self-government, municipal institutions spread over the country, and freed the Legislature from a vast amount of mere parish work, whilst it stimulated the energies of the people, and educated them in public business. School-houses went up in every district, and it was no longer a subject of reproach that schoolmasters in many sections were not even able to teach their pupils to write. The result was, in the course of a very few years, an educational system which is confessedly the most comprehensive and the cheapest in the world. Steps were taken to establish a Civil Service which can compare favourably with its English prototype, despite the influence of political favouritism and pressure, which tends to overcrowd the departments, and prevent too often justice being done to real merit and usefulness.

The tendency of the old policy that prevailed with respect to the British American Provinces, previous to the visit of Lord Durham, was isolation. The statesmen of Great Britain directed all their efforts to govern the Colonies by means of division, and to break them down as much as possible into petty isolated communities, incapable of combination, and possessing no sufficient strength for individual resistance to the Empire. The Union of 1841 was the first great step in the direction of the consolidation of the Empire on the northern part of this continent. It did its work in stimulating the progress of the Canadas, and educating their public men for a broader field of Colonial emulation. The necessity of uniting all the provinces became obvious, when the Union of 1841 no longer worked harmoniously on account of the jealousies and rivalries of the two sections: Upper Canada would not be content with a representation equal to that of the French Canadian Province, with its much smaller population and wealth. Government was practically at a dead-lock when the public men of both political parties combined to bring about a Confederation as a solution of the difficulties which otherwise were insurmountable. Under this plan of Confederation the provinces have reached a political status of the most perfect freedom compatible with the position of a dependency. The control which Canada exercises over her local affairs is perfectly unlimited, and from the Island of Cape Breton to the Island of Vancouver, her Central Government at Ottawa rules a "dominion" which, if not a nation in name and fact, possesses all the elements of such. The natural aspirations of her public men have been gratified by the opening up of a wider field of ambition. Not only may the Government at Ottawa appoint and dismiss the governors of each province, but it has been given the territorial control of a vast region of country, far larger than many European states, and it has the power of marking out new provinces, and establishing therein a system of government. Our system of government no longer rests on the mere instructions of a Colonial Secretary of State to the Governor-General, but has all the authority of an Imperial Charter. The Imperial Government has handed over to the Canadian Administration the complete control over the internal affairs of the Dominion, and cannot be induced by any pressure from within or without to interfere with their constitutional rights, now resting on so broad and liberal a basis. This adherence to a fixed policy with respect to Canada has been very clearly illustrated in the case of the somewhat complicated and perplexing constitutional difficulty which has ended in the dismissal of Mr. Letellier de St. Just from the Lieutenant-Governorship of Quebec.

“It will not have escaped your observation,” writes the Colonial Secretary to the Marquis of Lorne, “that the constitutional question to which it relates is one affecting the internal affairs of the Dominion, and belongs to a class of subjects with which the Government and Parliament of Canada are fully competent to deal. I notice with satisfaction that owing to the patience and ability with which the new Constitution has been made by the Canadian people to fulfil the objects with which it was framed, it has very rarely been found necessary to resort to the Imperial authority for assistance in any of those complications which might have been expected to arise during the first years of the Dominion; and I need not point out to you that *such references should only be made in circumstances of a very exceptional nature.*”

II. In no respect has the liberal policy of the Parent State towards its Colonial Dependencies effected so marked and so important a change, as in the matter of trade and commerce. Canada was, for very many years in her early career, weighed down by a system which controlled her commercial freedom, and effectually prevented her attaining that commercial expansion to which her natural resources entitled her. In the old days of French dominion, she was little better than a military post, whose feeble garrison was condemned to live in a state of perpetual warfare and insecurity, frequently suffering from famine, without any trade, except what was monopolised by privileged companies. Under the English régime, and the influx of a new class of settlers, whose instincts were all in the direction of commercial enterprise, it was inevitable that commerce should make a certain progress, which would have been less possible under the French system of Colonial government; but still that progress was more or less trammelled, not only by the political troubles that arose from the operation of an erroneous political system, but chiefly from the effect of the restrictive commercial policy of the Empire. This policy has been well summarised by Mr. Merivale, in the following five paragraphs:—

1. Restrictions on the exportation of produce from the Colony elsewhere than to the mother-country.

2. Restrictions on the importation of goods into the Colony from foreign countries.

3. Restrictions on the importation of Colonial produce into the mother-country from foreign countries or Colonies.

4. Restrictions on the carriage of goods to and from the Colonies in other shipping than that of the mother-country.

5. Restrictions on the manufacture of their own raw produce by the colonists.

It took many years for English statesmen and publicists to see the short-sightedness of this policy. Writers of all parties, with a few exceptions, concurred in lauding a policy which was considered to be the very corner-stone of the Colonial system in the British Empire. These restrictions disappeared one after the other, according as the policy of the parent state towards the Colonies became more liberal. But it was not till the principles of Free Trade began to make some headway in the mother-country, and English statesmen saw the necessity of leaving to Canadians the free control of their own affairs, that the Navigation Laws were repealed in their entirety, and Canada left free to develop her commerce in the mode best calculated to stimulate her resources.

The right of Canada to regulate her fiscal policy in her own interests has always been practically admitted by the British Government, and when on one occasion it was called in question, it was distinctly and emphatically vindicated by Sir Alexander Galt, then Minister of Finance. Whilst admitting that due regard should be always had to the interests of the mother-country, he pointed out what is an obvious truth :—

“Self-government would be utterly annihilated if the views of the Imperial Government were to be preferred to those of the people of Canada. It is, therefore, the duty of the present Government distinctly to affirm the right of the Canadian Legislature to adjust the taxation of the people in the way they deem best, even if it should unfortunately happen to meet the disapproval of the Imperial Ministry. Her Majesty cannot be advised to disallow such acts, unless her advisers are prepared to assume the administration of the affairs of the Colony, irrespective of the views of its inhabitants. The Imperial Government are not responsible for the debts and engagements of Canada, they do not maintain its Judicial, Educational, or Civil Service, they contribute nothing to the internal government of the country, and the Provincial Legislature, acting through a Ministry directly responsible to it, has to make provision for all these wants. They must necessarily claim and exercise the widest latitude as to the nature and extent of the burdens to be placed on the industry of the people.”*

The broad principle enunciated in the foregoing State paper has never since been questioned, but has been practically acquiesced in by the British Government. We see that very clearly in the case of the new tariff of 1879, which has been avowedly framed not merely to raise a revenue to meet the absolute necessities of Canada, but also to develop native manufactures and other interests, which,

* Report to Government, 25th October, 1859.

it is claimed, cannot be fostered except through such fiscal legislation. This tariff has been notoriously viewed with disfavour in Great Britain, on the ground that it bears heavily against Imperial interests as represented by England's merchants and manufacturers—a contention denied by its advocates in and out of Parliament; but whatever may be the effect of this policy—and that is a question which has nothing to do with the present argument—no Minister of the Crown nor publicist in England has ventured to argue that Canada has not an undoubted right, as a free dependency, to act as she thinks best in this matter.

The freedom which Canada enjoys in the regulation of her home and foreign commerce is very clearly illustrated by her State papers, which give a history of the various negotiations which have led to the extension of her commercial relations with other countries. In all treaties that may immediately affect Canadian interests, the right of Canada to have a voice in their adoption or rejection has been distinctly recognised for a quarter of a century. The Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 between the United States and the British North-American Provinces was a great concession made to Colonial commerce by the Government of Great Britain in response to the demands of the Colonies. In this case the provincial legislatures were allowed to accept or reject the Treaty as each might deem expedient. The same policy was still more emphatically illustrated in the case of the more important Treaty of Washington, when one of the High Commissioners was the Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald, the Premier of Canada. In the subsequent arrangement of the Fishery Award, in conformity with the provisions of the foregoing Treaty, one of the arbitrators was Sir Alexander Galt. The results in these cases have been eminently favourable to Canada, in comparison with former negotiations with the United States, which only tended to the detriment of the Colonies, as the history of the boundary line between Canada and the United States abundantly attests.

Equal consideration has been given to the wishes of the Canadian people, when on other occasions they have been attempting to enlarge their trade relations, even though the result might to some extent conflict with the commercial policy of the mother-country. In a despatch of the 12th July, 1855, the Imperial policy was laid down in the following words: "But this policy of freedom for the producer and trader, as well as the consumer, would be seriously affected, if Colonial legislatures were to establish differential duties in favour of their own natural productions or manufactures, whether against the British or the foreign producer. And a similar violation of the principles of Free Trade would result, if

favour were shown, in the legislation of a Colony, to one Colony over another, by the reduction or total abolition of duties in favour of particular Colonies."

But the principle laid down in this and subsequent despatches since 1850, has been practically departed from as respects the dependencies of the Crown in North America. In 1850 an Act was passed empowering the Governor in Council to permit the free entry into Canada of the products of any of the North American provinces, and though Earl Grey, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, called attention to its provisions, the Act was not disallowed; and subsequent enactments of a similar kind have from time to time received the sanction of Parliament, and been left to their operation by Her Majesty's Government. In 1860, when it was proposed to have Free Trade between the Provinces, the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade recommended that it should be made a condition of the assent of Her Majesty's Government to the proposed measure, that any such exemption from import duty should be equally extended to all similar produce and manufacture of other countries. To this proposal the Canadian Government took exception, and after some correspondence on the subject Her Majesty's Government, in a despatch from the Duke of Newcastle, under date of 5th February, 1861, intimated that they "had no wish to offer any obstacles to any endeavours which might be made by the respective Provincial Governments to bring about free commercial intercourse between the North American Provinces." The policy enunciated in that despatch was carried out in 1867 which created a commercial as well as political union between the Provinces of British North America. Again, in 1868, by a despatch to the Governor-General dated the 24th July, it is declared that "no objection is made to the power taken to admit the produce of any of the neighbouring North American Provinces duty free;" and a Bill passed by the Legislature of Prince Edward Island (not then a member of the Canadian Confederation), to admit Canadian flour into that island duty free which had passed through the United States, whilst flour the growth of the United States was liable to duty, was, after discussion, assented to.

But it may here be remarked that it has not been possible to extend the same principle of Reciprocity to other Colonies outside of British North America. In 1865, Commissioners were sent out to the West Indies with the object of extending the commercial relations between Canada and those southern countries. The delegates, whose mission had the approval of the British Government, were distinctly informed in their letter of instructions that

“the Government of Canada would be prepared to recommend to Parliament the reduction or even abolition of any Customs duties now levied on the productions of those countries, if corresponding favour were shown to the staples of British North America in their markets.” The mission was abortive, on account of the unwillingness of the British Government to move in the matter. As those countries do not enjoy responsible government, or are the Colonies of foreign powers, it was impossible for Canada to come to any arrangement with their local governments except through the medium of Great Britain. At the present time a movement is being made in a similar direction, and negotiations have been opened up with Spain with the approval of the British authorities; and it is earnestly to be hoped that the result will be favourable. It is only a logical conclusion of the past and present policy of the Parent State towards her Canadian dependency that its interests should be invariably consulted, not only in relation to trade with other Colonies, but in relation to all commercial treaties made by England with foreign countries.

III. With this brief and necessarily imperfect review of the national progress of Canada under the liberal policy pursued towards her by the Imperial Government since 1840, we may now most conveniently proceed to consider some of the material results that are the natural sequence of the political and commercial liberty that she now enjoys. Under the old Colonial system, so repressive of national ambition and commercial enterprise, Canada made but little progress in population and wealth. When the new constitution came into operation in 1792, the total population of British North America did not exceed 175,000 souls, who were mostly French Canadians living on the banks of the St. Lawrence and its tributary rivers. The total population of what is now the premier province of Ontario was then only some 20,000, and the increase was very slow during the next half-century. In the years of political discontent and uncertainty previous to 1840 the population and trade of the country languished, and in all British North America there were only a million and a quarter of inhabitants, of whom at least a third lived in Lower Canada. With the constitution of 1841 commenced a new era of enterprise and progress. No community in the world ever exceeded the progress made in all the elements of wealth and prosperity by the province of Upper Canada during the decade from 1841 to 1851. The population of the provinces now comprising the Dominion rose to nearly two millions and a half during that period, of whom Ontario could claim a million, or an excess of a hundred thousand souls over the population of the province of Quebec. This population found

profitable employment in the fertile lands of the West, and thriving towns and villages soon dotted the broad expanse of the province, where so many Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen have raised themselves from a condition of poverty and misery to one of affluence and wealth. By 1871 the population of all Canada had risen to three millions and a half, and may be estimated at over four millions at the present time, the immigration having for years been comparatively insignificant, owing to the depressed condition of trade and manufactures throughout the Dominion.

In 1851 there were only some 8,000,000 acres of land under cultivation, whereas the census of 1871 showed that the total acreage occupied in Canada was some 36,000,000, of which the greater portion was improved. By 1851 the farmers raised some 16,000,000 bushels of wheat, and the production may now be estimated at 25,000,000 bushels. In 1851 wheat was the principal crop, but since then the farmers began to turn their attention to other products; and the result is, the oat crop has risen from 25,000,000 bushels in 1851 to 50,000,000 in 1879; potatoes, from 15,000,000 bushels to 50,000,000; barley, from 1,500,000 bushels to 12,000,000. The yield of wheat per acre in Ontario is in excess of nearly all the States of the American Union, and it is said that in the north-west forty bushels is the usual yield from the rich alluvial lands, whose power of production is perfectly unlimited.

The revenue, which did not exceed a million of dollars in 1840, rose to 13,000,000 dols. in 1864, and is now some 22,000,000 dols., whilst each of the provinces has revenues of its own for local purposes, and the municipalities provide largely for education and certain classes of public works. The debt of the country has largely increased, but this debt, instead of representing war and famine, illustrates the energy and enterprise of the people, in providing canals, railways, and other public works, absolutely necessary to the development of the country, and assuming in many cases a national importance.

In 1851 the total value of the trade of Canada was not in excess of 60,000,000 dols., but with the building of canals and railways, and the stimulus that was given by the steady influx of population and capital, the trade in the course of the next twenty years assumed magnificent proportions. In 1868-9 the total trade reached over 130,000,000 dols., and during the six years following the union 2,000,000 dols. was the total annual value of the imports and exports; but from 1874 Canadian commerce began to recede before the wave of commercial depression which steadily gained ground until the total value of the trade during the past year did not exceed 175,000,000 dols. One feature of this trade may here be

noticed, and that is the decrease in the imports from Great Britain. In 1873 and 1874 their value was nearly 70,000,000 dols. in the aggregate, whilst they have declined steadily ever since, until in 1878 they did not reach 40,000,000 dols., whilst, on the other hand, the value of imports from the United States has varied but little during the same period. The chief causes of the falling off in British imports must be sought in the financial depression of the country, and in the fact that American manufactured goods have for years been thrown into the Canadian market irrespective of cost, and with the sole idea of underselling British manufacturers and destroying Canadian industries. Looking at the nature of the exports we find that the annual value of the produce of the fisheries was nearly 7,000,000 dols.; of the forest, 20,000,000 dols., and of agriculture, 31,000,000 dols.

Perhaps no statistics more clearly illustrate the material progress of Canada than those which are devoted to her shipping and her railways. It is the pride and boast of Canada that her people have that love for the sea which is the natural heritage of the men of the North. The little province of Nova Scotia owns more shipping in proportion to her population of some 400,000 souls than any other country in the world; and her sails are to be seen in every port of the world. In 1806 all British North America only owned a tonnage of 71,943; in 1879, the total tonnage reached some 1,350,000 tons register, representing 7,469 vessels, valued at 40,000,000 dols., or £8,000,000 sterling, and entitling Canada to rank with Norway, after England and the United States, as a mercantile people. The tonnage engaged, inwards and outwards, between Canada and foreign ports, reached 12,000,000, and adding the vessels employed in the coasting trade, we have a total of 23,000,000 tons necessary for carrying on the present trade of Canada.

The era of railway construction in Canada only dates from 1850. In 1847 there were only some forty miles altogether in operation, whilst in 1867, the number had increased to 2,253 miles. At the present time there are some 7,000 miles of rails laid, and over 1,000 in course of construction. The Intercolonial and Grand Trunk Railways furnish an uninterrupted line of communication from Sarnia to Halifax, with many feeders joining them in all directions. That great national enterprise, the Canadian Pacific Railway, has several hundred miles in running order; and before half a decade has passed away the locomotive will not be far from the base of the Rocky Mountains. As it passes over the vast plains of the North-west, watered by the Red, Saskatchewan, and Peace Rivers, a stream of population must necessarily obey the law which

forces it to follow railway progress in a new country. Already a large city is growing up on the banks of the Red River, and immigrants can reach it by uninterrupted railway communication from Halifax or Quebec. The posts of the Hudson's Bay Company of Adventurers are no longer the sole representatives of civilisation in what was once truly called the "Great Lone Land," but settlements of enterprising pioneers are already battling with the wilderness far in advance of the railway. We can indeed say with the poet Whittier :—

"I hear the tread of pioneers
Of nations yet to be ;
The first low wash of human waves,
Where soon shall roll a sea."

IV. It has been sometimes said that the configuration of Canada has its disadvantages from its lack of breadth and compactness, as compared with the United States, with its wider expanse of territory, and its greater and more available extent of sea-coast on two oceans. But Canada possesses in the St. Lawrence a great natural artery of commerce to which her American neighbour cannot offer a rival ; and it is inevitable that sooner or later the bulk of Western produce must find its way to Europe through this river, with its splendid system of canals, which so admirably illustrate the enterprise of Canada. It must also be borne in mind that the Dominion has ports on her eastern sea-board open at all seasons, and nearer to Europe than are any of the American harbours ; and the time is not far distant when the Atlantic entrepôt of trade will be the port of Louisbourg, which once played so important a part in the conflict between England and France for empire on this continent. The fisheries of the maritime provinces are the object of the envy of the United States, whilst the mineral resources of coal and iron on the Atlantic and Pacific coast offer unrivalled means of wealth and enterprise in the future. In the north-west there is a grain-producing region in course of development, far greater in value and extent than any now possessed by the United States. All these are the elements of a prosperous nation, whose population in a few decades should be continuous from Ontario to Vancouver. The future destiny of such a country is a question which may well attract the attention of the publicist and economist. It may be said that mere speculation on such a subject cannot enable us to come to any profitable conclusion ; and yet it requires no gift of political prophecy to see that the time must, sooner or later, come when the relations between the parent State and her Canadian dependency must be placed on some more substantial basis. Three destinies are obviously open to Canada—annexation, inde-

pendence, or consolidation into the Empire. Absorption by the United States is a question which need hardly be discussed now-a-days. In the old times it had its advocates, especially before the union of 1840, when Canadians looked across the border and saw a prosperous progressive people enjoying free institutions, and their natural corollaries of a widely-diffused education, and an ever-advancing commerce, whilst Canada was labouring under the disadvantages of a system which repressed all the free instincts of a people desirous of self-government, and the opportunity for expansion which it would give to their energies. In later times the very free intercourse which the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 created between the two peoples, especially between New England and the maritime provinces, was doubtless in a measure preparing the way, very insidiously, but not the less surely, to more intimate relations in the future; and a similar result, there is every reason to believe, would arise from some such Zollverein as has had its advocates of recent years. But in these times there is not even a fragment of an annexation party in this country. The progress that has been made since 1867-8 in consolidating and developing the Canadian Dominion has naturally stimulated the pride of Canadians in their country, and though they are prepared to do full justice to the greatness and the enterprise of the American Republic to their south, they do not necessarily link their political fortunes together in the future, but prefer to believe that in the work of civilising America they have each their allotted work to perform in friendly rivalry; that in the vast regions which they own on the Continent there is ample scope for the energy of two peoples, sprung from the same great stock and animated by the same love for free institutions.

As respects the second destiny, independence, it is more probable than the first; but so far it has not assumed, and is not likely to assume for a long while to come, any practical shape, though the idea may obtain some currency among the ambitious youth of the country, that the time must come when Canada will take a place in the community of nations. It is true her wealth and resources are now far greater than are those of several nations in the old and new world, which have their ambassadors and consuls, and a certain influence and weight in the affairs of the world. It is true that a mere Colonial existence, though it has its comforts and freedom from responsibilities, has also its tendency to cramp intellect, and stamp colonists as somehow inferior to those who control directly the affairs of an Empire. But whatever may be in the future, Canadians of the present day are too wise to allow their ambition to run away with their common sense, and to precipitate them into the endless expense and complications which would

naturally follow were they to be dazzled by the glamour of Canadian nationality.

The idea of a consolidation of the Empire is undoubtedly grand in its conception, but very difficult in its realisation. This idea by no means originated in the present generation of political thinkers. Pownall, Shirley, and Otis, famous men of old Colonial times, saw in such a scheme one of the great means of strengthening the Empire. One of the most eloquent of Canadian statesmen, the late Joseph Howe, of Nova Scotia, some thirty years ago, delivered a speech on the "Organization of the Empire," which was a very forcible illustration of the feelings of the Canadians when they looked around at the isolated Colonies, whose interests were becoming more jarring and distinct as time rolled on :—

"What we require is union with the Empire ; an investiture with the rights and dignity of British citizenship. . . . The millions who inhabit the British Isles must make some provision for the peoples who live beyond the seas. They may rule the barbarous tribes, who do not speak their language or share their civilization, by the sword ; but they can only rule or retain such provinces as are to be found in North America, by drawing their sympathies around a common centre, by giving them an interest in the army, the navy, the diplomacy, the administration, the legislation of the Empire."

Edmund Burke once said, when discussing the question,— "*Opposuit Natura*, I cannot remove the eternal barriers of the creation," though he did not absolutely assert the impracticability of Colonial representation in an Imperial Parliament. But it cannot be said in this latter half of the nineteenth century that nature interposes barriers to the consummation of the idea. Steam and electricity have annihilated time and distance, whilst the enterprise of the press and the diffusion of political intelligence among all classes enable colonists in Canada and Australia, as well as Englishmen or Scotchmen or Irishmen in the British Isles, to understand and discuss intelligently all the great issues that interest England and her Colonial Empire. No one can question the ability of Canadians or Australians, educated as they have been in parliamentary government, to take an intelligent and effective part in the councils of the Empire. The great difficulty that suggests itself is to see how they can be best brought into those councils.

The present relations between the parent state and its dependencies are anomalous and inconsistent in many ways. The union between them is to a great extent nominal in its nature, and based on a mere sentiment. Canada owns allegiance to the sovereign of England, accepts her accredited representative with every demon-

stration of respectful loyalty, and acknowledges the Imperial obligations resting on her as a Dependency by sustaining a militia at her own expense, and offering some regiments in a time of actual or prospective war. In all other respects, however, Canada virtually occupies the position of an independent state ; for she can frame her tariffs, and even fix the expenses of her militia and defence solely with a regard to Canadian interests. On the other hand, England may to-morrow, in pursuance of some policy of her own, draw the whole Empire into war, and though colonists must be affected more or less by the results, they have no opportunity of giving their approval or disapproval to the policy. Their trade may suffer, their towns and cities may be destroyed, in the progress of a conflict which, in its origin and object, has no interest for them so far as their country is concerned ; and though in the future, as in the past, they will bear their full share of the responsibilities resting on them as the people of a dependency, yet the result must assuredly tend to show that their condition is one of decided inferiority, compared with that of the people of Great Britain, who can alone control the destiny of the Empire in matters of such supreme moment. It may be said that England has hitherto borne the burthen of the expense and labour necessary to enable the Colonies to attain their present position, and that it is their turn now to take their share of the heat and toil of the day, and relieve the parent state somewhat in the present ; but it will not surely be urged that because Canada has grown to maturity, she must still necessarily remain a mere spectator in the affairs of the family of which she forms a part, and is at the same time to keep up the family feuds without having the opportunity of putting in a word now and then, on the one side or the other.

In several respects, certainly, the interests of Canada and the Empire ought to be identical. It is assuredly anomalous that one section of the Empire should have a fiscal policy entirely distinct from that of the other ; that the defensive system of Canada should be considered without any reference to the defence of Scotland, or any other portion of the Empire. Or, consider the state of things with respect to the important question of emigration. The necessities of the masses have driven millions of people from the British Islands during the last sixty or seventy years to seek new homes in America ; and only a small proportion has actually settled in Canada. A writer in a recent issue of the *Westminster Review* has very clearly and emphatically pointed out the dangers that must accrue to England from the policy of indifference which allows this emigration to flow into foreign countries. He calculates that England has for over sixty years made the United States a present of a gift equal to

nearly 100,000,000 dols. a year, and proceeds to show that only under a system of Imperial Federation can this stream of population be diverted into a channel which will bring wealth and power to the parent state, instead of carrying off the elements of national prosperity to enrich foreign powers, or build up new nations which will be her rivals in the future.

At the present time the public men of Canada are opening up to civilization a vast wilderness in the North West, capable of giving food to many millions, and are using their best efforts to connect that vast region with the railway system of Canada and the United States. A project like this cannot be considered as purely Colonial in its conception and effect. On the contrary, the construction of a Canadian Pacific Railway must have a remarkable influence on the future of the Empire on this continent; for it will carry along with it the elements of wealth and greatness, open up a road to Asiatic seas through British territory, and give continuity and stability to a new nationality, stretching from ocean to ocean, whose ultimate destiny can best be controlled by an Imperial policy in the present, which will unmistakably prove that the interest of the parent state and its dependency are closely identical. Had the Canadians representation in the Imperial councils, they would obviously be in a better position than they are now to press their legitimate claims to some material aid towards the completion of a work which is so essential to the maintenance of British dominion on the northern half of the continent.

The isolation of the Colonies from the Empire is the inevitable sequence of the present Colonial system. Consolidation may be the rule as respects the Colonies *per se*, but disintegration is certainly the effect on the Empire as a whole. These premises being granted—and it is impossible to see how they can be denied—the question will naturally arise as to the means for carrying out a political scheme which has so many national reasons in its favour. How is it possible to bring together into an Imperial Federation so many diverse interests as are represented by the Colonial Dependencies of Great Britain? Might it not be possible to mature a plan which would enable those Dependencies now possessing free parliamentary institutions to be represented in the general councils of the Empire, or to apply the Federal principle to the Empire? The Imperial Parliament could deal with all great questions of peace and war, of commerce and finance, and such other matters as might affect the Empire as a whole, while the internal affairs of the British Islands and of each section of the Empire could be arranged in local legislature. **Then, the British Empire would exist in fact as well as in name.** Already, the idea of a change in the relations between the

different parts of the Empire is rapidly gaining ground in England as well as in Canada, and there is every reason to believe that before long, a practical movement will be made to promote so desirable a project. One of the most prominent statesmen of Canada, the Hon. Edward Blake, has very emphatically expressed his opinion that "an effort should be made to re-organise the Empire on a Federal basis." The present Premier of Canada, the Right Hon. Sir John Macdonald, only a few weeks ago, seemed to commit himself to the same grand idea when he said :—

"I stand here as the exponent of the great principles by which Canada shall become not merely a dependency of England, but an auxiliary to that great country—principles under the operation of which England will turn round to us, and ask for our young men, our soldiery, to fight the battles of Great Britain."

No one can be so bold, then, as to say that the question may not, even in our own day, before the dawn of a new century, enter into the domain of practical politics. Events occur with extraordinary rapidity now-a-days, and measures which are mere subjects of theoretical discussion to-day may become the facts of to-morrow. The history of the constitutional changes that have taken place in Canada within three quarters of a century, prove that the force of events frequently carries statesmen in a direction which they did not contemplate at the outset. British statesmen were actually forced into the concession of responsible Government by a combination of circumstances which proved that representative institutions were practically effete without such a concession. The union of the provinces at times afforded a fruitful theme of discussion in the press, and even in Parliament, but it never assumed a practical shape until the political difficulties of Canada forced her public men into the consideration of a national idea. So it may be with this question of the Federation of Great Britain and her Dependencies. The necessities of the Empire may at last make this momentous question one of the practical issues of the day. In the meantime, the Colonial Dependencies must continue their work of national development in that courageous and enterprising spirit which their people inherit from the parent races, and in the hope that when the time comes for solving their true destiny among the nations, their place will be found not one of isolation from the parent state, but one of more intimate connection, which will elevate them above the mere subordinate part they now play, and give them their true rank in that noble theatre of action which the Empire should offer to all its sons, whether they live in the "old home" or in the Colonial communities which encircle the globe.

